

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A method and system for providing a local user of an instant messaging system
with updated status information regarding one or more remote users that provides
indication to a local user of whether an instant messaging status message has been
recently updated. The disclosed system provides a "new status message" visual
indication when a status message for a remote user has recently changed. A timer may be
10 employed to determine how long a new status message visual indication is provided after
the status message has changed. The status message itself may be obtained by various
specific techniques, such as hovering the cursor over a graphical object for a remote user
associated with the new status indication, hovering over the new status indication itself,
or clicking through the new status indication or associated graphical object, or through
15 some other appropriate technique.